REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action that issued October 6, 2003. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and removal of the grounds for rejection are respectfully requested.

Applicant has canceled Claim 5 without prejudice. The subject matter indicated as allowable in this claim has been incorporated into independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Claims 1, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15 be allowed. Further, Claims 2-5, 7-10, and 13 depends from one of Claims 1, 6, and 12 and are allowable for at least this reason as well as for the separately patentable elements contained therein. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Claims 2-5, 7-10, and 13 also be allowed. A continuation application and preliminary amendment, directed to the subject matter covered by the cancelled claims will be filed to continue the prosecution of the canceled claims after receipt of a Notice of Allowance.

This amendment places the instant application in condition for immediate allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Senior Patent Counsel

(914) 333-9665 January 5, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

It is hereby certified that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to:

> Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Tonuary 6, 2004 Noemi Chape